Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-7 (canceled).

8.   (currently amended)   A method for screening for a neoplastic disease characterized by an increase in <u>the level of unprocessed</u> ~~expression of~~ VEGF-D <u>polypeptide</u>, comprising:

obtaining a sample from an organism suspected of being in a neoplastic disease state characterized by an increase in <u>the level of unprocessed</u> ~~expression of~~ VEGF-D <u>polypeptide</u>,

exposing said sample to a composition comprising <u>an antibody</u> ~~a compound~~ that specifically binds <u>to unprocessed</u> VEGF-D <u>polypeptide</u>;

~~washing said sample;~~ and

screening for said disease by detecting the presence, quantity or distribution of said <u>antibody</u> ~~compound~~ in said tissue sample, where detection of <u>an increase in the level of unprocessed</u> VEGF-D in cells in or around a potential neoplastic growth is indicative of a neoplastic disease.

9.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 8, wherein said antibody compound is a monoclonal antibody which specifically binds unprocessed VEGF-D.

10.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 8, wherein said antibody is a monoclonal antibody binds to the VEGF homology domain of VEGF D.

11.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 8, wherein a said antibody compound includes a detectable label.

12.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 8, wherein said neoplastic disease is selected from the group consisting of malignant melanoma, breast ductal carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, prostate cancer and endometrial cancer.

13.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 8, wherein said sample is a human tissue sample.

14.   (currently amended) A method for screening for a neoplastic disease characterized by an increase in the level of unprocessed expression of VEGF-D polypeptide, comprising:

obtaining a sample from an organism suspected of being in a

neoplastic disease state ~~characterized by an increase in expression of VEGF-D~~;

exposing said sample to a composition comprising <u>an antibody</u> ~~a~~

~~compound~~ that specifically binds <u>to unprocessed</u> VEGF-D;

washing said sample; and

screening for said disease by detecting the presence, quantity or

distribution of said <u>antibody</u> ~~compound~~ in said sample, where detection of <u>an</u>

<u>increased level of unprocessed</u> VEGF-D in or on blood vessel endothelial cells <u>or</u>

in or around a potential neoplastic growth is indicative of a neoplastic disease.

15.   (currently amended) ~~A~~ <u>The</u> method according to claim 14, wherein

said <u>antibody</u> ~~compound~~ is a monoclonal antibody which specifically binds

<u>unprocessed</u> VEGF-D.

16.   (currently amended) ~~A~~ <u>The</u> method according to claim 15, wherein

said antibody binds to the VEGF homology domain of VEGF-D.

17.   (currently amended) ~~A~~ <u>The</u> method according to claim 14, wherein

~~a~~ said <u>antibody</u> ~~compound~~ includes a detectable label.

18. (currently amended) A method for screening for a neoplastic disease characterized by an increase in blood vessel vascular endothelial cells, comprising:

obtaining a sample from an organism suspected of being in a neoplastic disease state characterized by an increase in blood vessel vascular endothelial cells;

exposing said sample to a composition comprising an antibody a compound that specifically binds to unprocessed VEGF-D;

washing said sample; and

screening for disease by detecting the presence, quantity or distribution of said antibody compound in said sample, where detection of an increase in the level of unprocessed VEGF-D in or on blood vessel endothelial cells in or around a potential neoplastic growth is indicative of a neoplastic disease.

19. (currently amended) A The method according to claim 18, wherein said antibody compound is a monoclonal antibody which specifically binds to unprocessed VEGF-D.

20. (currently amended) A The method according to claim 19, wherein said antibody binds to the VEGF homology domain of VEGF-D.

21.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 18, wherein a said antibody compound includes a detectable label.

22.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 18, further comprising exposing the sample to a second antibody compound that specifically binds to at least one of VEGFR-2 and VEGFR-3, and wherein the screening step comprises detection of the antibody compound that binds VEGF-D and the second antibody compound bound to blood vessel vascular endothelial cells, to determine the presence, quantity or distribution of blood vessel endothelial cells having both VEGF-D and at least one of VEGFR-2 and VEGFR-3 in or around a potential neoplastic growth.

23.   (currently amended) A method for screening for a neoplastic disease characterized by an increase in lymph vessel endothelial cells, comprising:

obtaining a sample from an organism suspected of being in a neoplastic disease state characterized by an increase in lymph vessel endothelial cells;

exposing said sample to a composition comprising an antibody a compound that specifically binds unprocessed VEGF-D;

washing said sample; and

screening for said disease by detecting the presence, quantity or distribution of said antibody compound in said sample, where detection of an

increase in the level of unprocessed VEGF-D in or on lymph vessel endothelial cells in or around a potential neoplastic growth is indicative of a neoplastic disease.

24.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 23, wherein said antibody compound is a monoclonal antibody which specifically binds unprocessed VEGF-D.

25.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 24, wherein said antibody binds to the VEGF homology domain of VEGF-D.

26.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 23, wherein a said antibody compound includes a detectable label.

27.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 23, further comprising exposing the sample to a second antibody compound that specifically binds to VEGFR-3, and wherein the screening step comprises detection of the antibody compound that binds VEGF-D and the second antibody compound bound to lymph vessel endothelial cells, to determine the presence, quantity or distribution of lymph vessel endothelial cells having both VEGF-D and VEGFR-3 in or around a potential neoplastic growth.

Claims 28-35 (canceled).

36.   (currently amended) A method of screening a tumor for metastatic risk, said method comprising:

exposing a tumor sample to a composition comprising <u>an antibody</u> ~~a compound~~ that specifically binds <u>unprocessed</u> VEGF-D;

washing said sample; and

screening for metastatic risk by detecting the presence, quantity or distribution of said <u>antibody</u> ~~compound~~ in said sample, where <u>an increased level of</u> expression of <u>unprocessed</u> VEGF-D by said tumor is indicative of metastatic risk.

37.   (currently amended) ~~A~~ <u>The</u> method according to claim 36, wherein said <u>antibody</u> ~~compound~~ is a monoclonal antibody which specifically binds <u>unprocessed</u> VEGF-D.

38.   (currently amended) ~~A~~ <u>The</u> method according to claim 37, wherein said antibody binds to the VEGF homology domain of VEGF-D.

39.   (currently amended) ~~A~~ <u>The</u> method according to claim 36, wherein ~~a~~ said <u>antibody</u> ~~compound~~ includes a detectable label.

40.   (currently amended) A method of detecting micro-metastasis of a neoplastic disease state characterized by an increase in expression of unprocessed VEGF-D comprising:

obtaining a tissue sample from a site spaced from a neoplastic growth in an organism in said neoplastic disease state;

exposing said sample to a composition comprising an antibody a compound that specifically binds unprocessed VEGF-D;

washing said sample; and

screening for said metastasis of said neoplastic disease by detecting the presence, quantity or distribution of said antibody compound in said tissue sample, where detection of an increased level of unprocessed VEGF-D in said tissue sample is indicative of metastasis of said neoplastic disease.

41.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 40, wherein said tissue sample is a lymph node from tissue surrounding said neoplastic growth.

42.   (currently amended) A The method according to claim 40, wherein said antibody compound is a monoclonal antibody which specifically binds unprocessed VEGF-D.

43.   (currently amended) A ~~The~~ method according to claim 42, wherein said antibody binds to the VEGF homology domain of VEGF-D.

44.   (currently amended) A ~~The~~ method according to claim 40, wherein ~~a~~ said <u>antibody</u> ~~compound~~ includes a detectable label.